

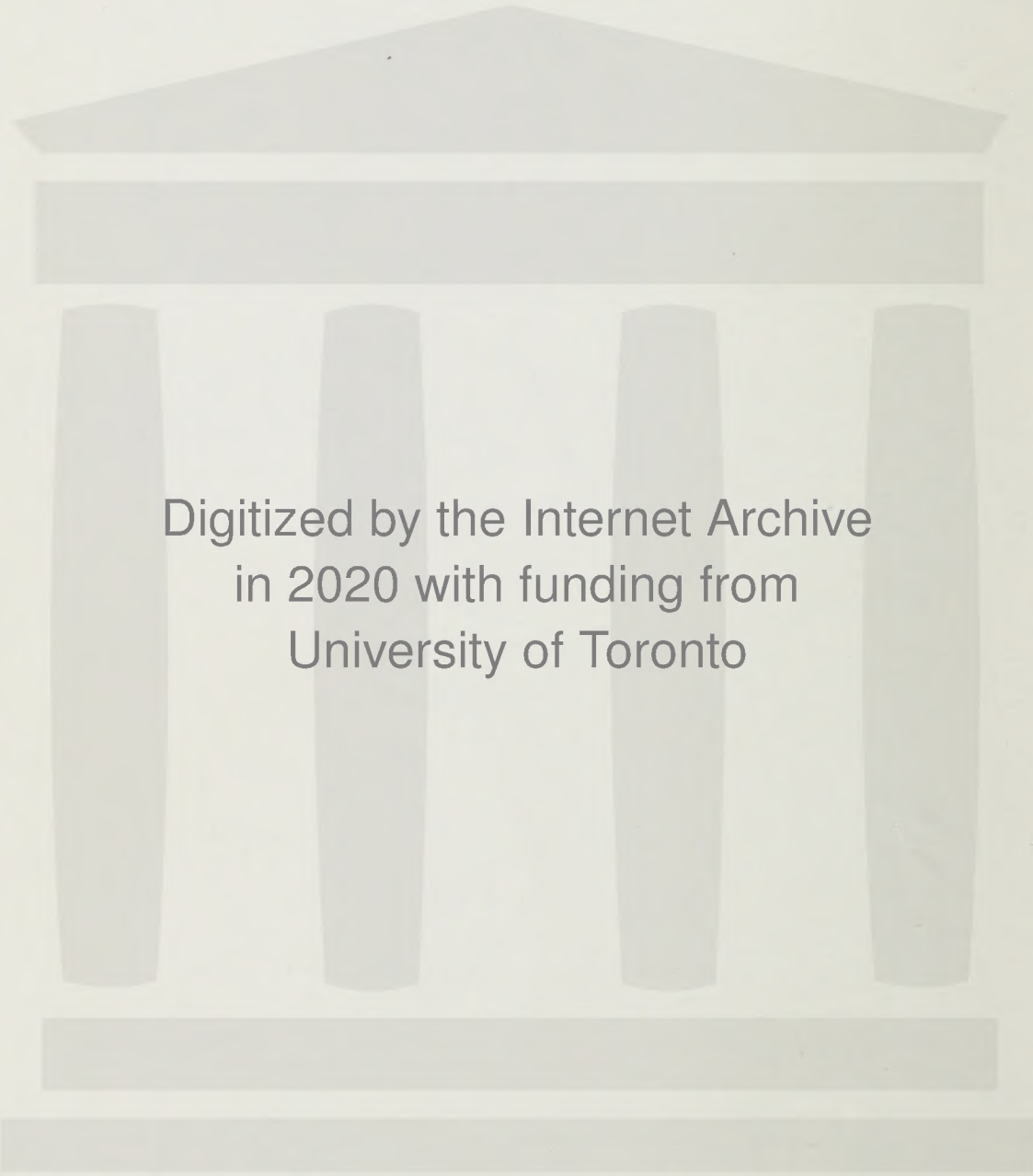
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The three devils

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THE THREE DEVILS :

LUTHER'S, MILTON'S, AND GOËTHE'S.

LUTHER, Milton, and Goëthe: these are three strange names to bring together. It strikes us, however, that the effect will be interesting if we connect these three great names, as having each represented to us the Principle of Evil, and each represented him in a different way. Each of the three has left on record his conception of a great accursed being, incessantly working in human affairs, and whose function it is to produce evil. There is nothing more striking about Luther than the amazing sincerity of his belief in the existence of such an evil being, the great general enemy of mankind, and whose specific object, at that time, it was to resist Luther's movement, and, if possible, cut his own soul out of God's mercy. What Luther's exact conception of this being was is to be gathered from his life and writings. Again, we have Milton's Satan. And, lastly, we have Goëthe's Mephistopheles. Nor is it possible to confound the three, or, for a moment, to mistake the one for the other, they are as unlike as it is possible for three grand conceptions of the same thing to be. It cannot, therefore, but be interesting and profitable to make their peculiarities and their differences a subject of study. Milton's Satan, and Goëthe's Mephistopheles, have indeed been frequently contrasted in a vague, antithetic way; for no writer could possibly go through a description of Goëthe's Mephistopheles without saying something or other about Milton's Satan: but the exposition of the difference between the two has never been sufficiently elaborate; and, besides, it appears to us, that it will have the effect of giving the whole speculation immensely greater value and interest if, in addition to Milton's Satan and Goëthe's Mephistopheles, we take in Luther's Devil. In this paper, therefore, we shall attempt to expound the difference between Luther's Devil, Milton's Satan, and Goëthe's Mephistopheles; and, of course, the way to do this effectively is to expound the three in succession. On this thread, slight as it may seem,

it will be possible to string many reflections.

It is scarcely necessary to premise that there is to be no theological discussion in this paper. All that we propose is, to compare, as we find them, three very striking delineations of the Evil Principle, one of them experimental, the other two poetical.

These last words indicate one respect, in which it will be perceived, at the outset, that Luther's conception of the Evil Principle on the one hand, and Milton's and Goëthe's on the other, are fundamentally distinguishable. All the three, of course, are founded on the Scriptural proposition of the existence of a being whose express function it is to produce evil. Luther, firmly believing every jot and tittle of Scripture, believed the proposition about the Devil also, and so the whole of his experience of evil in himself and others was cast into the shape of a verification of that proposition; whereas, had he started without such a preliminary conception, his experience would have had to encounter the difficulty of expressing itself in some other way, which, it is likely, would not have been nearly so effective, or so Luther-like. Milton, too, borrows the elements of his conception of Satan from Scripture; the Fallen Angel of the Bible is the hero of *Paradise Lost*; and one of the most striking things about this poem is, that in it we see the grand imagination of the poet blazing in the very track of the propositions of the theologian. And, though there can be no doubt that Goëthe's Mephistopheles is conceived less in the spirit of Scripture than either Milton's Satan or Luther's Devil, still, even in Mephistopheles, we discern the lineaments of the same traditional being. All the three, then, have this in common—that they are founded on the Scriptural proposition of the existence of an accursed being, whose function it is to produce evil, and that, more or less, they adopt the Scriptural account of this being. Still, as we have said, Luther's conception of this being belongs to one

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category; Milton's and Goëthe's to another. Luther's is a biographical phenomenon; Milton's and Goëthe's are literary performances. Luther illustrated the Evil Being of Scripture to himself, by means of his personal experience. Whatever resistance he met with—whatever obstacle to Divine grace he found in his own heart or in external circumstances—whatever event he saw plainly cast in the way of the progress of the Gospel—whatever outbreak of a bad or unamiable spirit occurred in the Church—whatever strange phenomenon of nature wore a malevolent aspect,—out of that he obtained a clearer notion of the Devil. In this way, it might be said, that Luther was all his life gaining a deeper insight into the Devil's character. On the other hand, Milton's Satan and Goëthe's Mephistopheles are poetical creations—the one epic, the other dramatic. Borrowing the elements of his conception from Scripture, Milton set himself to the task of describing the ruined archangel as he may be supposed to have existed at the epoch of the creation, when he had hardly decided his own function as yet, warring with the almighty, or, in pursuit of a gigantic scheme of revenge, travelling from star to star. Poetically assuming the device of the same Scriptural proposition, Goëthe set himself to the task of representing the Spirit of Evil as he existed 6000 years later, no longer gifted with the same powers of locomotion, or struggling for admission into this part of the universe, but plying his understood function in crowded cities, and on the minds of individuals. Now, so far as the mere fact of Milton's making Satan the hero of his epic, or of Goëthe's making Mephistopheles a character in his drama, qualifies us to speak of the theological opinions of of the one or of the other, we are not entitled to say that either Milton or Goëthe believed in a Devil at all, as Luther did; or, again, it is quite conceivable that Milton might have believed in a Devil as sincerely as Luther did, and that Goëthe might have believed in a Devil as sincerely as Luther did also; and yet, that, in that case, the Devil which Milton believed in might not have been the Satan of the *Paradise Lost*, and the Devil which Goëthe

believed in might not have been the Mephistopheles of *Faust*. Of course, we have other means of knowing whether Milton did actually believe in the existence of the great accursed being whose fall he sings. Of course, also, it is plain that Goëthe's Mephistopheles resembles Luther's Devil more than Milton's Satan does, in this respect, that Mephistopheles is the expression of a great deal of Goëthe's actual observation of life and experience in human affairs. Still, neither the fact, on the one hand, that Milton did believe in the existence of the Evil Spirit, nor the fact, on the other, that Mephistopheles is an expression for the aggregate of much profound thinking on the part of Goëthe, is of force to obliterate the fundamental distinction between Luther's Devil, as a biographical reality, and Milton's Satan and Goëthe's Mephistopheles as two literary performances. If we might risk summing up under the light of this preliminary distinction, perhaps the following would be near the truth: Luther had as strong a faith as ever man had in the existence and activity of the Evil Spirit of Scripture; he used to recognise the operation of this spirit in every individual instance of evil as it occurred; he used, moreover, to conceive that this spirit and he were personal antagonists, and so, just as one man forms to himself a distinct idea of the character of another man to whom he stands in an important relation, Luther came to form to himself a distinct idea of the Devil: and what this idea was it seems possible to arrive at by examining his writings. Milton, again, chose the Scripture personage as the hero of an epic poem, and employed his grand imagination in realising the Scripture narrative: we have reason also to know that he did actually believe in the Devil's existence; and it agrees with what we know of Milton's character to suppose that the Devil thus believed in would be pretty much the same magnificent being he has described in his poem, though, on the whole, we should not say that Milton was a man likely to carry about with him, in daily affairs, any constant recognition of the Devil's presence. Lastly, Goëthe, adapting, for a different literary effect, the

Scriptural and traditional account of the same being, conceived his Mephistopheles. This Mephistopheles, there is no doubt, had a real allegoric meaning with Goëthe; he meant him to typify the Evil Spirit in modern civilisation; but whether Goëthe did actually believe in the existence of a supernatural intelligence, whose function it is to produce evil, is a question which no one will take it upon himself to answer, although, if he did, it may be unhesitatingly asserted that this supernatural intelligence cannot have been Mephistopheles. From all this it appears, that Luther's conception of the evil being belongs to one category; Milton's and Goëthe's to another. Now it strikes us that, for the purposes of the present article, the best order to consider the three in will be, 1st. Milton's Satan; 2d. Goëthe's Mephistopheles; and, 3d. Luther's Devil.

The difficulties which Milton had to overcome in writing his *Paradise Lost* are immense, and such as none except a blind man could have encountered. The gist of these difficulties may be defined as consisting in this, that the poet had at once to represent a supernatural condition of being, and to construct a story. He had to describe the ongoings of angels, and, at the same time, to make one event naturally follow another. It was comparatively easy for Milton to sustain his conception of these superhuman beings as mere objects or phenomena, to represent them flying singly through space like huge black shadows, or standing opposite to each other in hostile "battalions; but to construct a story in which these beings should be the agents, to exhibit these beings thinking, scheming, blundering, in such a way as to produce a likely succession of events, was enormously difficult. The difficulty was to make the course of events correspond with the reputation of the objects. To do this perfectly was literally impossible. It is possible for the human mind to conceive twenty-four great supernatural beings existing together at any given moment in space; but it is utterly impossible to conceive what would occur among these twenty-four beings during twenty-four hours. The value of time, the amount of history that can be transacted in a given

period depends on the nature and prowess of the beings whose volitions make the string of events, and so a lower order of beings can have no idea at what rate things happen in a higher, the mode of causation will be different from that with which they are acquainted. This is the difficulty that Milton had to struggle with, or, rather, this is the difficulty which he did not struggle with. He had to construct a narrative, and so, while he represents to us the full stature of his superhuman beings as mere objects or phenomena, he does not attempt to make events follow each other at a higher rate among these beings than they do among ourselves, except in the single respect of their being infinitely more powerful physical agents than we are. Whatever feeling of inconsistency is experienced in reading the *Paradise Lost* may be traced, we think, to the necessities of the story obliging the poet not to attempt to make the rate of causation among these beings as extraordinary as his description of them as phenomena. Such a feeling of inconsistency there is, and yet Milton sustains his flight as nobly as mortal could have done. Throughout the whole poem we see him recollecting his original conception of Satan as an object:—

" Thus Satan, talking to his nearest mate,
With head uplift above the waves, and eyes
That sparkling blazed; his other parts
besides
Prone on the flood, extended long and large,
Lay floating many a rood."

Paradise Lost, book i.

And this is a great thing to have done. If he ever flags in his conception of these superhuman beings as objects, it is when he finds it necessary to describe a multitude of them assembled together in some *place*; and his usual device then is to reduce the bulk of the greatest number. This, too, is for the behoof of the story. If it be necessary, for instance, to assemble the angels to deliberate, this must be done in an audience-hall, and the human mind refuses to go beyond certain limits in its conception of what an audience-hall is. Again, the gate of hell is described,

although the hell of Milton is a mere vague extent of fiery element, which, in strict keeping, could not be described as having a gate; only the narrative requires the conception. And so in other cases. Still, consistency of objective description is admirably sustained throughout. Nor is it merely as objects or phenomena that Milton sustains throughout a consistent conception of the angels; he is likewise consistent in his description of them as physical agents. Lofty stature and appearance carry with them a promise of so much physical power; and hence, in Milton's case, the necessity of finding words and figures capable of expressing modes and powers of mechanical action, on the part of the angels, as superhuman as the stature and appearance he has given them. This complicated his difficulties very much; for it is quite conceivable that a man should be able to describe the mere appearance of a gigantic being, standing up, as it were, with his back to a wall, and yet utterly break down, and not find words the moment he tried to describe this gigantic being stepping forth into colossal activity, and doing some characteristic thing. Milton has overcome this difficulty. His conception of the angels as physical agents does not fall beneath his conception of them as mere objects. In his description, for instance, in the sixth book, of the angels tearing up mountains by the roots, and slinging them upon each other, we have strength suggested corresponding to the reputed stature of the beings. In extension of the same remark, we may observe how skilfully Milton has aggrandised and eked out his conception of the superhuman beings he is describing, by endowing them with the power of infinitely swift motion through space; for this has the effect of making the reader think that things in general are proceeding with the due rapidity. Moreover, we offer our readers an observation which they may verify for themselves. Milton, we are persuaded, had it vaguely in his mind, throughout the *Paradise Lost*, that the bounding peculiarity between the human condition of being and the angelic one he is describing is the law of gravitation. We, and all that is cognisable by us, are subject to this law; but creation may be

peopled with beings who are not subject to it, and to us these beings are as if they were not. But, whenever one of these beings becomes cognisable by us, he instantly becomes subject to gravitation, and he must resume his own mode of being ere he can be free from its consequences. The angels were not subject to gravitation; that is to say, they had the means of moving in any direction at will. When they rebelled, and were punished by expulsion from heaven, they did not *fall* out; for, in fact, so far as the description intimates, there existed no planet, no distinct material element towards which they could gravitate; they were driven out by a pursuing fire. Then, after their fall, they had the power of rising upward, of navigating space, of quitting hell, directing their flight to one glittering planet, alighting, at last, on its rotund surface, and then bounding off again, and away to another. A corollary of this fundamental difference between the human condition of being and the angelic would be, that angels are capable of direct vertical action, whereas men are capable only of horizontal,—that is to say, an army of men can exist only as a square, or rectangle, or other plane figure, whereas an army of angels can exist as a cube or parallelopiped. Now, in every thing relating to the physical action of the angels, even in carrying out this notion, Milton is most consistent. But it was impossible to follow out the superiority of these beings to its whole length. The attempt to do so would have made a narrative impossible. Exalting our conception of these beings as mere objects, or as mere physical agents, as much as he could, it would have been suicidal in the poet to attempt to realise history as it really must be among these beings. No human mind could do it. He had, therefore, except wherein the notion of physical superiority assisted him, to make events follow each other just as they would in a human narrative. The motives, the reasonings, the misconceptions of these beings, all that determined the succession of events, he had to make substantially human. The whole narrative, for instance, proceeds on the supposition of these supernatural beings having no higher degree of knowledge than human beings, with

equal physical advantages, would have had under similar circumstances. Credit the spirits with a greater degree of insight—credit them even with such a strong conviction of the Divine omnipotence as, in their reputed condition of being, we can hardly conceive them not attaining, and the whole of Milton's story is sponged out; the crushing conviction of the Divine omnipotence could have prevented them from rebelling with the alleged motive; or, after having rebelled, it would have prevented them from struggling with the alleged hope. In the *Paradise Lost*, the working notion that the devils have about God is exactly that which human beings have when they hope to succeed in a bad enterprise. Otherwise, the poem could not have been written. Supposing the fallen angels to have had a working notion of the Deity as superhuman as their reputed appearance and physical greatness, the events of the *Paradise Lost* might have happened nevertheless; but the chain of volitions would not have been the same, and it would have been impossible for any human poet to realise the narrative.

These remarks are necessary to prepare us for conceiving the Satan of Milton. Except, as we have said, for an occasional feeling during a perusal of the poem that the style of thinking and speculating about the issue of their enterprise is too meagre and human for a race of beings physically so superhuman, one's astonishment at the consistency of the poet's conceptions is unmitigated throughout. Such a keeping is there between one conception and another, such a distinct material grasp had the poet of his whole subject, so little is there of the mystic or the hazy in his descriptions from beginning to end, that it would be quite possible to prefix to the *Paradise Lost* an illustrative diagram exhibiting the universal space in which Milton conceived his beings moving to and fro, divided, as he conceived it, at first into two or three, and afterwards into four tropics or regions. Then his narrative is so clear, that a brief prose version of it would be a history of Satan in the interval between his own fall and the fall of man. It is to be noted that Milton as a poet goes upon the Homeric method, and

not the Shakspearian; devoting the whole strength of his genius to the object, not of being discursive and original, not of making profound remarks on every thing as he goes along, but of carrying on a sublime and stately narrative. We should hardly be led to assert, however, that the difference between the epic and the drama lies in this, that the latter may be discursive and reflective, while the former cannot. We can conceive an epic written after the Shakspearian method, that is, one which, while strictly sustaining a narrative, should be profoundly expository in its spirit. Certain it is, however, that Milton wrote after the Homeric method, and did not aim at strewing his text with luminous original propositions. One consequence of this is, that the way to obtain an idea of Milton's Satan is not to lay hold of specific sayings that fall from his mouth, but to go through his history. Goethe's Mephistopheles, we shall find, on the other hand, reveals himself in the characteristic propositions which he utters. Satan is to be studied by following his progress; Mephistopheles, by attending to his remarks.

In the history of Milton's Satan, it is important to begin at the time of his being an archangel. Before the creation of our world, there existed, according to Milton, a grand race of beings altogether different from what we are. These beings were spirits. They did not lead a planetary existence; they tenanted space, in some strange, and, to us, inconceivable way. Or, rather, they did not tenant all space, but only that upper and illuminated part of infinity called heaven. For heaven, in Milton, is not to be considered as a locality, but as a region stretching infinitely out on all sides—an immense extent of continent and kingdom. The infinite darkness, howling and blustering underneath heaven, was chaos, or night. What was the exact mode of being of the spirits who lived disseminated through heaven is unknown to us, but it was social. Moreover, there subsisted, between the multitudinous, far-extending population of spirits and the Almighty Creator, a relation closer, or, at least, more sensible and immediate, than that which exists between human beings and Him. The best way of expressing

this relation in human language is, by the idea of physical nearness. They were God's angels. Pursuing, each individual among them, a life of his own, agreeable to his wishes and his character, yet they all recognised themselves as the Almighty's ministering spirits. At times they were summoned, from following their different occupations in all the ends of heaven, to assemble near the Divine presence. Among these angels there were degrees and differences: some were in their very essence and constitution grander and more sublime intelligences than the rest; others, in the course of their long existence, had become noted for their zeal and assiduity. Thus, although really a race of beings, living on their own account as men do, they constituted a hierarchy, and were called angels. Among all the vast angelic population, three or four individuals stood pre-eminent and unapproachable. These were the archangels. Satan was one of these: if not the highest archangel in heaven, he was one of the three highest. After God, he could feel conscious of being the greatest being in the universe. But although the relation between the Deity and the angelic population was so close, that we can only express it by having recourse to the conception of physical nearness, yet, even to the angels the Deity was so shrouded in clouds and mystery, that the highest archangel might proceed on a wrong notion of his character, and, just as human beings do, might believe the Divine omnipotence as a theological proposition, and yet, in going about his enterprises, might not carry a working consciousness of it along with him. There is something in the exercise of power, in the mere feeling of existence, in the stretching out of a limb, in the resisting of an obstacle, in being active in any way, which generates a conviction that our powers are self-contained, hostile to the recollection of inferiority or accountability. A messenger, employed on his master's business, becomes, in the very act of serving him, forgetful of him. As the feeling of enjoyment in action grows strong, the feeling of a dependent state of being, the feeling of being a messenger, grows weak. Repose and physical weakness are favourable to the recognition of a

derived existence; hence the beauty of the feebleness of old age preceding the approach of death. The feebleness of the body weakens the self-sufficient feeling, and disposes to piety. The young man, rejoicing in his strength, cannot believe that his breath is in his nostrils. In some such way the archangel fell. Rejoicing in his strength, walking colossal through heaven, gigantic in his conceptions, incessant in his working, ever scheming, ever imagining new enterprises, Satan was in his very nature the most active of God's archangels, he was ever doing some great thing, and ever thirsting for some greater thing to do. And, alas! his very wisdom became his folly. His notion of the Deity was higher and grander than that of any other angel: but, then, he was not a contemplative spirit; and his feeling of derived existence grew weak in the glow and excitement of constant occupation. As the feeling of enjoyment in action grew strong, the feeling of being an angel grew weak. Thus the mere duration of his existence had undermined his strength and prepared him for sin. Although the greatest angel in heaven, nay, just because he was so, he was the readiest to fall. At last an occasion came. When the intimation was made by the Almighty in the congregation of the angels that he had anointed his only-begotten Son King on the holy hill of Zion, the archangel frowned and became a rebel, not because he had weighed the enterprise to which he was committing himself, but because he was hurried on by the impetus of an overwrought constitution. Even had he weighed the enterprise, and found it wanting, he would have been a rebel nevertheless; he would have rushed into ruin on the wheels of his old impulses. He could not have said to himself, "It is useless to rebel, and I will not;" and, if he could, what a hypocrite to have stayed in heaven! No, his revolt was the natural issue of the thoughts to which he had accustomed himself; and his crime lay in having acquired a rebellious constitution, in having pursued action too much, and spurned worship and contemplation. Herein lay the difference between him and the other archangels, Raphael, Gabriel, and Michael.

Satan in his revolt carried a third part of the angels along with him. He had accustomed many of the angels to his mode of thinking. One of the ways in which he gratified his desire for activity had been that of exerting a moral and intellectual influence over the inferior angels. A few of these he had liked to associate with, discoursing with them, and observing how they drank in his ideas. His chief associate, almost his bosom-companion, had been Beelzebub, a princely angel. Moloch, Belial, and Mammon, had likewise been admitted to his confidence. These five had constituted a sort of clique in heaven, giving the word to a whole multitude of inferior angels, all of them resembling their leader, in being fonder of action than of contemplation. Thus, in addition to the mere hankering after action, there had grown up in Satan's mind a love of power. This feeling of its being a glorious thing to be a leader seems to have had much to do with his voluntary sacrifice of happiness; for we conceive it to have been voluntary. Foreseeing ever so much misery would not have prevented such a spirit from rebelling. Having a third of the angels away with him in some dark, howling region, where he might rule over them alone would have seemed, even if he had foreseen it, infinitely preferable to the puny sovereignty of an archangel in that world of gold and emerald—"Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven." Thus we conceive him to have faced the anticipation of the future. It required little persuasion to gain over the kindred spirit of Beelzebub. These two appear to have conceived the enterprise from the beginning in a different light from that in which they represented it to their followers. Happiness with the inferior spirits was a more important consideration than with such spirits as Satan and Beelzebub, and to have hinted the possibility of losing happiness in the enterprise would have been to terrify them away. Satan and Beelzebub were losing happiness to gain something which they thought better; to the inferior angels nothing could be mentioned that would appear better. Again, the inferior angels, judging from narrower premises, might indulge in enthusiastic expectations,

which the greater knowledge of the leaders would prevent them from entertaining. At all events, the effect of the intercourse with the angels was, that a third of their number joined the standard of Satan. Then began the wars in heaven related in the sixth book of the poem. Now we have to remark, that Satan's carrying on these wars with the hope of victory is not inconsistent with what we have just been saying, as to the possibility of Satan's not having proceeded on a false calculation. We are apt to imagine these wars as wars between the rebel angels and the armies of God. Now this is true; but it is scarcely the proper idea in the circumstances. How could Satan have hoped for victory in that case? You can only suppose that he did by lessening his intellect, by making him a mere blundering Fury, and not a keen, far-seeing Intelligence. But in warring with Michael and his followers he was, until the contrary should be proved, warring merely against his fellow-beings of the same heaven, whose strength he knew and feared not. The idea of physical nearness between the Almighty and the angels confuses us here. Satan had heard the threat which had accompanied the proclamation of the Messiah's sovereignty; but it may have been problematical in his mind whether the way in which God would fulfil the threat would be to make Michael conquer him. So he made war against Michael and his angels. At last, when all heaven was in confusion, the Divine omnipotence interfered. On the third day the Messiah rode forth in his strength to end the wars and expel the rebel host from heaven. They fled, driven before his thunder. The crystal wall of heaven opened wide, and the two lips rolling inward, disclosed a specious gap yawning into the wasteful deep; the reeling angels saw down, and hung back affrighted; but the terror of the Lord was behind them; headlong they threw themselves from the verge of heaven into the fathomless abyss, eternal wrath burning after them down through the blackness like a hissing fiery funnel.

And now the Almighty determined to create a new kind of world, and to people it with a race of beings

different from that already existing, inferior in the meantime to the angels, but with the power of working themselves up into the angelic mode of being. The Messiah, girt with omnipotence, rode out on this creating errand. Heaven opened her everlasting gates, moving on their golden hinges, and the King of Glory, uplifted on the wings of cherubim, rode on and on into chaos. At last he stayed his fervid wheels and took the golden compasses in his hand. Centering one limb where he stood, he turned the other silently and slowly round through the profound obscurity. Thus were the limits of our universe marked out of that azure region in which the stars were to shine, and the planets were to wheel. On the huge fragment of chaos thus marked out, the creating spirit brooded, and the light gushed down. In six days the work of creation was completed. In the centre of the azure universe hung a silvery star. That was the earth. Thereon in a paradise of trees and flowers walked Adam and Eve, the last and the fairest of all God's creatures.

Meanwhile the rebel host lay rolling in the fiery gulf underneath chaos. The bottom of chaos was hell. Above it was chaos proper, a thick, black, sweltering element. Above it again was the new experimental world, cut out of it like a mine, and brilliant with stars and galaxies. And high over all behind the stars and galaxies was heaven itself. Satan and his crew lay rolling in hell, the fiery element underneath chaos. Chaos lay between them and the new world. Satan was the first to awake out of stupor and realise the whole state of the case, what had occurred, what was to be their future condition of being, and what remained to be attempted. In the first dialogue between him and Beelzebub we see that, even thus early, he had ascertained what his function was to be for the future, decided in what precise mode of being he could make his existence most pungent and perceptible.

"Of this be sure,
To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do evil our sole delight,
As being the contrary to His high will
Whom we resist."

Here the ruined archangel first strikes

out the idea of existing for ever after as a devil. It is important to observe that his becoming a devil was not the mere inevitable consequence of his being a ruined archangel. Beelzebub, for instance, could see in the future nothing but a prospect of continued suffering, until Satan communicated to him his conception of a way of enjoying action in the midst of suffering. Again, some of the angels appear to have been ruminating the possibility of retrieving their former condition by patient enduring. The gigantic scheme of becoming a devil was Satan's. At first it existed in his mind only as a vague perception, that the way he would be most likely to get the worth of his existence was to employ himself thenceforward in doing evil. The idea afterwards became more definite. After glancing round their new domain, Beelzebub and he aroused their abject followers. In the speech which Satan addresses to them after they had all mustered in order, we find him hint an opening into a new career, as if the idea had just occurred to him:—

"Space may produce new worlds; where-
of so rife

There went a fame in heaven that He ere
long

Intended to create, and therein plant
A generation whom His choice regard
Should favour equal to the sons of heaven.
Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
Our first eruption."

Here is an advance in definiteness upon the first proposal, that, namely, of determining to spend the rest of existence in doing evil. Casting about in his mind, as it were for some specific opening, Satan had recollected the talk they used to have in heaven about the new world that was to be cut out of chaos, and the new race of beings that was to be created to inhabit it, and it instantly struck his scheming fancy that this was the weak point of the universe. If he could but insert the wedge here! However he did not announce the scheme fully at the moment, but went on thinking. In the council of gods which was summoned, some advised one thing, some another. Moloch was for open war; Belial had great faith in the force of circumstances; and Mammon was for organising their new kingdom, so as

to make it as comfortable as possible. No one, however, could say the exact thing that was wanted. At last Beelzebub, prompted by Satan, rose and detailed the project of their great leader:—

“ There is a place
(If ancient and prophetic fame in heaven
Err not), another world, the happy seat
Of some new race call'd Man, about this
time
To be created like to us, though less
In power and excellence, but favour'd
more
Of Him who rules above. So was His
will
Pronounced among the gods, and by an
oath
That shook heaven's whole circumference
confirm'd.
Thither let us bend all our thoughts and
learn
What creatures there inhabit, of what
mould,
Or substance, how endued, and what
their power
And where their weakness; how at-
tempted best;
By force or subtlety.”

This was Satan's scheme. The more he had thought on it the more did it recommend itself to him. It was more feasible than any other. It held out an indefinite prospect of action. And, moreover, it would be adding another fragment of the universe to Satan's kingdom, mingling and confounding the new world with hell, and dragging down the new race of beings to share the perdition of the old. The scheme was universally applauded by the angels, who seem to have differed from their leaders in this, that they were sanguine of being able to better their condition, whereas their leaders sought only the gratification of their desire of action. The question next was, who would venture out of hell to explore the way to the new world? Satan volunteered the perilous excursion. Immediately putting on his swiftest wings, he directs his solitary flight towards hell-gate, where sat Sin and Death. When, at length, the gate was opened to give him exit, it was like a huge furnace-mouth, vomiting forth smoke and flames into the womb of chaos. Issuing thence, Satan spread his sail-broad wings for flight, and began his toilsome way upward, half on foot, half on wing, swimming, sinking, wading, climb-

ing, flying, through the thick and turbid element. At last he emerged out of chaos into the light of the new universe. Winging leisurely now through the balmy ether, he looked upward to the deep soft azure powdered with stars. Upward and upward still he flew, till high in the distance he discerned his former home with its opal towers and sapphire battlements, and hanging thence by a golden chain our little world, with the moon by her side.

When Satan arrived in the new creation, the whole phenomenon was strange to him, and he had no idea what kind of a being man was. He asked Uriel, whom he found there fulfilling some Divine errand, in which of all the shining orbs round him man had his fixed seat; or whether he had a fixed seat at all, and was not at liberty to shift his residence, and dwell now in one star, now in another. Uriel, deceived by the appearance which Satan had assumed, points out the way to Paradise. Alighting on the surface of the new world, Satan walks about immersed in thought. Heaven's gate was in view, overhead and round him were the quiet hills and the green fields. Oh, what an errand he had come upon! [His thoughts were sad and noble. Fallen as he was, all the archangel stirred within him. Oh, had he not been made so high, he would never have fallen so low. Is there no hope even now, no room for repentance? Such were his first thoughts, but he roused himself and shook them off. “The past is gone and away; it is to the future that I must look. Perish the days of my archangelship! perish the name of archangel! Such is my name no longer. My future, if less happy, shall be more glorious. Ah, and this is the world I have singled out for my experiment! Formerly, in the days of my archangelship, I ranged at will through infinity, doing one thing here and another there. Now I must contract the sphere of my activity, and labour nowhere but here. But it is better to apply myself to the task of thoroughly impregnating one point of space with my presence than to go flapping my wings vaguely all through the universe. Ah, but may not my nature suffer by the change?”

In thus selecting a specific aim, in thus concerning myself exclusively with one point of space, and forswearing all interest in the innumerable glorious things that may be happening out of it, shall I not run the risk of degenerating into a smaller and meaner being? In the course of ages of dealing with the puny offspring of these new beings, may I not dwindle down into a mere pungent, pettifogging spirit? What would Raphael, Gabriel, and Michael, say, were they to see their old comate changed into such a being? But be it so. If I cannot cope with the Almighty on the grand scale of infinity, I shall, at least, make my existence sensible by opposing his plans respecting this new race of beings. Besides, by beginning with this, I may worm my way to a more effective position in the universe. At all events, I shall have a scheme on hand, and be incessantly occupied. And, as time makes the occupation more congenial, if I do become less magnanimous, I shall, at the same time, become happier. And, whether my fears on this point are visionary or no, it will, at least, be a noble thing to have it to say that I have raised a whirlpool that shall suck down generation after generation of these new beings, before their Maker's eyes, into the same wretched condition of being to which he has doomed us. It will be something so to vitiate the universe, that, let him create, create on as he chooses, it may be like pouring water into a broken vessel."

In the very course of this train of thinking Satan begins to degenerate into a meaner being. He is on the very threshold of that career, on which, having fully entered, he will cease for ever to be the archangel and become irrevocably the Devil. The very manner in which he tempts our first parents is devil-like. It is in the shape of a cormorant on a tree that he sits watching his victims. He sat at the ear of Eve, squat like a toad. It was in the shape of a serpent that he tempted her. And when the evil was done he slunk away through the brushwood. In the very act of ruining man he committed himself to a life of ignominious activity,—he was to go on his belly and eat dust all his days.

Such is the story of Milton's Satan. •

It will be easy to express the idea which, by this time, we must have acquired of him, in the form of special characteristics, when we come to describe Milton's Satan and Goëthe's Mephistopheles by each other. With regard to Goëthe's Mephistopheles, we shall be much assisted in our efforts to conceive him by keeping in mind what we have been saying about Satan; it is so difficult to say absolutely, and without reference to any thing else, what Goëthe's Mephistopheles is. We do not think it possible to sum up, in a single expression, all that Goëthe meant to signify by his Mephistopheles. For one thing, it is questionable whether Goëthe kept strictly working out one specific meaning, and making it clearer all through Mephistopheles's gambols and devilries; or whether, having, once for all, allegorised the Spirit of Evil into a living personage, he did not just treat him as he would have any other of his characters, making him always consistent, always diabolic, but nowise intent upon making his actions run parallel to any under-current of exposition. The way to proceed, therefore, is to treat Mephistopheles as a character in a drama, which we wish to study. Now it strikes us that we shall be on the right track if, in the first place, we establish a relation between Satan and Mephistopheles, by adopting the notion which we have imagined Satan himself entertaining when engaged in scheming out his future life, and supposing Mephistopheles to be what Satan has become in 6000 years. Milton's Satan is the ruined archangel deciding his future function, and forswearing all interest in other regions of the universe, in order that he might more thoroughly possess and impregnate this. Goëthe's Mephistopheles is this same being after the toils and vicissitudes of 6000 years in his new vocation, smaller, meaner, ignobler, but a million times sharper and cleverer. As a sort of corroboration of this view, we may refer in passing to the Satan of the *Paradise Regained*, who, though still a sublime and Miltonic being, dealing in high thoughts and high arguments, yet seems to betray, in his demeanour, the effects of 4000 years spent in a new walk. Is there not something Mephistopheles-like, for instance, in

the description of the fiend's appearance when he approached Christ to begin his temptation? Christ was walking alone and thoughtful one evening in the thick of the forest where he had lived fasting forty days, when he heard the dry twigs behind him snapping beneath approaching footsteps. He turned round, and

“An aged man in rural weeds,
Following as seem'd the quest of some
stray ewe,
Or wither'd sticks to gather, which might
serve
Against a winter's day when winds blow
keen
To warm him, wet return'd from field at
eve
He saw approach; who first with curious
eye
Perused him, then with words thus
utter'd spake.”

Observe how all the particulars of this description are drawn, as it were, out of the very thick of the civilisation of the past 4000 years, and how the whole effect of the picture is to suggest a Mephistophelic-looking man, whom it would be disagreeable to meet alone. In fact, if we had space, we could make more use of the *Paradise Regained*, as exhibiting the transition of Satan into Mephistopheles. But we must pass at once to Goëthe.

→ Viewing Mephistopheles in the proposed light (of course we do not pretend that Goëthe himself had any such idea about his Mephistopheles), a great deal of insight is to be got out of the Prologue in Heaven. For here we have Mephistopheles out of his element, and contrasted with his old co-equals. The scene is Miltonic. The heavenly hosts are assembled round the throne, and the three archangels, Raphael, Gabriel, and Michael, come forward to praise the Lord. The theme of their song is Creation; (not, as it would have been in Milton, as an event about to take place that would vary the monotony of the universe, but as a thing existing and grandly going on. It is to be noted, too, that while Milton ap-

peals chiefly to the sight, and is clear and coherent in his imagery, Goëthe produces a similar effect in his own manner by appealing to sight and hearing simultaneously, making sounds and metaphors dance and whirl through each other as in a wild, indistinct, but overpowering dream. Raphael describes the sun rolling on in thunder through the heavens, singing in chorus with the kindred stars. Gabriel describes the earth revolving on its axis, one hemisphere glittering in the light, the other dipped in shadow. Michael in continuation sings of the ensphering atmosphere and the storms that rage in it, darting forth tongues of lightning, and howling in gusts over land and sea. And then the three burst forth in symphony, exulting in their nature as beings deriving strength from serene contemplation, and proclaiming all God's works to be as bright and glorious as on the day they were created. Suddenly, while heaven is still thrilling to the grand undulation, another voice breaks in:

“Da du, O Herr, dich einmal wieder nahst.”

Ugh! what a discord! The tone, the voice, the words, the very metre, so horribly out of tune with what had gone before. Mephistopheles is the speaker. He has been standing behind, looking about him and listening with a sarcastic air to the song of the archangels, and when they have done he thinks it his turn to speak, and immediately begins. (It would be folly to give this passage except in the original).*

“Da du, O Herr, dich einmal wieder nahst
Und fragst wie alles sich bei uns befinde,
Und du mich sonst gewöhnlich gerne
sahst;
So siehst du mich auch unter dem
Gesinde.
Verzeih, ich kann nicht hohe Worte
machen,
Und wenn mich auch der ganze Kreis
verböhnt;
Mein Pathos brächte dich gewiss zum
Lachen,
Hatt'st du dir nicht das Lachen ab-
gewöhnt.”

* The following is Mr. Filmore's translation of the passage:—

“Since that thou dost, O Lord, approach once more,
And dost inquire how all things with us go,
And commonly hast seen me here before,
'T is, therefore, I am midst thy servants now.”

Von Sonn' und Welten weiss ich nichts
zu sagen
Ich sehe nur wie sich die Menschen
plagen.
Der kleine Gott der Welt bleibt stets von
gleichem Schlag,
Und ist so wunderbarlich als wie am ersten
Tag.
Ein wenig besser würd' er leben,
Hatt'st du ihm nicht den Schein des
Himmelslichts gegeben ;
Er nennt's Vernunft und braucht's allein,
Nur thierischer als jedes Thier zu seyn.
Er scheint mir, mit Verlaub von Ew.
Gnaden,
Wie eine der langbeinigen Cicaden,
Die immer fliegt und fliegend springt
Und gleich im Gras ihr altes Liedchen
singt ;
Und läg' er nur noch immer in dem
Grase !
In jedem Quark begräbt er seine Nase."

And so shameless, and at the same time so voluble is he, that he would go on longer in the same strain did not the Lord interrupt him. Now this speech both announces and exhibits Mephistopheles's nature. Without even knowing German, one could hardly hear it read as Mephistopheles's without seeing in it shamelessness, impudence, volubility, cleverness, a sneering, sarcastic disposition, want of heart, want of sentiment, want of earnestness, want of purpose, complete, confirmed, irrevocable devilishness. And besides, Mephistopheles candidly describes himself in it. When, in sly and sarcastic allusion to the archangel's style of speaking, he tells that he has not the gift of talking fine, he announces in effect that he is not going to be Miltonic. He is not

going to speak of suns and universes, he says. Raphael, Gabriel, and Michael, are at home in that sort of thing; but he is not. Leaving them, therefore, to tell how the universe is flourishing on the grand scale, and how the suns and the planets are going on as beautifully as ever, he will just say a word or two as to how human nature is getting on down yonder; and, to be sure, if comparison be the order of the day, the little godkin, man, is quite as odd as on the day he was made. And forthwith, with astounding impudence, he launches into a train of remark, the purport of which is that every thing down below is at sixes and sevens, and that in his opinion human nature has turned out a failure. And, heedless of the disgust of his audience, he would go on talking for ever, were he not interrupted.

And is this the Satan of the *Paradise Lost*? Is this the archangel ruined? this the being who warred against the Almighty, who lay floating many a rood, who shot upwards like a pyramid of fire, who navigated space wherever he chose, speeding on his errands from star to star, and who finally conceived the gigantic scheme of assaulting the universe where it was weakest, and impregnating the new creation with the venom of his spirit? Yes, it is he; but oh, how changed! For 6000 years he has been pursuing the walk he struck out at the beginning, plying his self-selected function, dabbling devilishly in human nature, and abjuring all interest in the grander

Excuse me if I talk not fine ;
I could not, though all round me scorn
At pathos thou wouldst laugh of mine,
Hadst thou not laughing long forborne.
Of suns and spheres I cannot speak ;
I nothing have to say of these ;
I only mark how all men wreak,
Each on the other, miseries.
The earth's small god continues yet
As odd as on creation's day.
A better lot he would have met
But for thy gift — that heavenly ray
He Reason calls, and uses so, that he
Grows the most brutish of the brutes to be ;
And, by your Grace's leave, appears to be
Like to those long-legg'd grasshoppers, that pass
A short-lived flight upon the wing,
But quickly fall again, and sing
The same old song amid the grass.
Well were that all, that there the fall would close,
But in each filthy mass they thrust their nose."

physics; and the consequence is, as he himself anticipated, that his nature, once great and magnificent, has become small, virulent, and shrunken,

“ Like the dyer’s band,
Reduced to what it works in.”

As if he had been journeying through a wilderness of scorching sand, all that was left of the archangel has long since evaporated. He is now a dry, cold, shrivelled-up, scoffing spirit. When, at the moment of scheming out his future existence and determining to become a devil, he anticipated the ruin of his nature, he could not help thinking with what a strange feeling he should then appear before his old co-equals, Raphael, Gabriel, and Michael. But now he stands before them disgustingly unabashed, almost ostentatious of not being any longer an archangel. Even in the days of his glory he was different from them. They luxuriated in contemplation; he in the feeling of innate all-sufficient vigour. And lo, now! They are unchanged, the servants of the Lord, revering the day’s gentle going. He, the scheming, enthusiastic archangel, has been soured and civilised into the clever cold-hearted Mephistopheles.

Mephistopheles is the spirit of evil in modern society. Goëthe’s *Faust* is an illustration of this spirit’s working in the history of an individual. The case selected is a noble one. Faust, a man of grand and restless nature, is aspiring after universality of feeling. Utterly dissatisfied and disgusted with all human method and all human acquisition, nay, fretting at the constitution of human nature itself, he has a passion for the infinite; he longs to spill out his soul, so that, mingling with the winds, it may become a part of the ever-thrilling spirit of the universe and know the essence of every thing. He has been contemplating suicide. To this grand nature struggling with itself Mephistopheles is linked. It is to be noted that throughout the whole drama there is no evidence of its being an object of very earnest solicitude with Mephistopheles to gain possession of the soul of Faust. Of course he desired this, and had it in view. Thus, he exacted a bond from Faust, and we find him also now and then chuckling when alone in antici-

pation of Faust’s ultimate ruin; but on the whole he is constant to no earnest plan for effecting it. In fact he is constant to no single purpose whatever. The desire of doing devilry is his motive all through. Going about with Faust was just being in the way of business, and having a companion at the same time. He studies his own gratification, not Faust’s, in all that he does. Faust never gets what he had a right to expect from him. He is dragged hither and thither through scenes he has no anxiety to be in, merely that Mephistopheles may enjoy some new and piquant piece of devilry. The moment he and Faust enter any where, he quits Faust’s side and mixes with the persons present, to do some mischief or other; and when it is done he comes back to Faust, who has been standing with his arms folded gloomily looking on, and asks him if he could desire any better amusement than this. Now this is not the conduct of a devil intent upon nothing so much as gaining possession of the soul of his victim. A Miltonic devil would have pressed on to the mark more. He would have been more self-denying, and would have kept his victim in better humour. But Mephistopheles is a devil to the very core. He is a devil in his conduct to Faust. What he studies is not to gratify Faust, but to find plenty of congenial occupation for himself, to perpetrate as great a quantity of evil as possible in as short a time as possible. Now it seems capable of being inferred, from this peculiarity in the character of Mephistopheles, that Goëthe had in his mind all through the poem a certain under-current of allegoric meaning. One sees that Mephistopheles, though acting as a dramatic personage, represents an abstract something or other.

The character of Mephistopheles is brought out all through the drama. In the first and second parts we have Faust and him brought into a great variety of situations, and into contact with a great variety of individuals; and in watching how Mephistopheles conducts himself in these we obtain more and more insight into his devilish nature. He manifests himself in two ways—by his style of speaking and by his style of acting. That is to

say, Mephistopheles, in the first place, has a habit of making observations upon all subjects, and throwing out all kinds of general propositions in the course of his conversation, and by attending to the spirit of these one can perceive very distinctly his mode of looking at things; and, in the second place, he acts a part in the drama, and this part is of course characteristic.

The distinguishing feature in Mephistopheles's conversation is the amazing intimacy which it displays with all the conceivable ways in which crime can be perpetrated. There is positively not a wrong thing that people are in the habit of doing that he does not seem to be aware of. He is profound in his acquaintance with iniquity. If there be a pin loose any where in society, he knows of it; if the affairs of the state are going into confusion, owing to some blockhead's mismanagement, he knows of it. He is versed in all the forms of professional quackery. He knows how pedants hoodwink people, how priests act the hypocrite, how physicians act the rake, how lawyers peculate. In all sorts of police information he is a perfect Fouché. He has gone deep enough into the subject to be able to write a book equal to Duchatelet's. And not only has he accumulated a mass of observations, but he has generalised those observations, and marked evil in its grand educational sources. If the human mind be going out into a hopeless track of speculation, he has observed and knows it. If the universities be frittering away the intellect of the youth of a country in useless and barren studies, he knows it. If atheistic politicians are vehemently defending the religious institutions of a country, he has marked the prognostication. Whatever promises to inflict misery, to lead people astray, to break up beneficial alliances, to make men flounder on in error, to cause them to die blaspheming at the last, he is thoroughly cognisant of it all. He could draw up a catalogue of social vices. He could point out the specific existing grievances to which the disorganisation of a people is owing, and lay his finger on the exact parent evils which the philanthropist ought to exert himself in exposing and making away

with. But here lies the diabolical peculiarity of his knowledge. It is not in the spirit of a philanthropist that he has accumulated his information; it is in the spirit of a devil. It is not with the benevolent motive of a Duchatelet that he has descended into the lurking-places of iniquity; it is because he delights in knowing the whole extent of human misery. The doing of evil being his function, it is but natural that he should have a taste for going into the details of his own profession. Nay more, as the spirit of all evil, who had been working from the beginning, how could he fail to be acquainted with all the existing varieties of criminal occupation? It is but as if he kept a diary. Now in this combination of the knowledge of evil, with the desire of producing it, lies the very essence of his character. The combination is horrible, unnatural, unhuman. Generally the motive to investigate deeply into what is wrong is the desire to rectify it; and it is rarely that profligates possess very valuable information. But in every one of Mephistopheles's speeches there is some profound glimpse into the rottenness of society, some masterly specification of an evil that ought to be rooted out; and yet there is not one of these speeches in which the language is not flippant and sarcastic, not one in which the tone is sorrowful or philanthropic. Every thing is going wrong in the world, twaddle and quackery every where abounding, nothing to be seen under the sun but hypocritical priests, sharking attorneys, unfaithful wives, children crying for bread to eat, men and women cheating, robbing, murdering each other. Hurrah! This is exactly a burst of Mephistophelic feeling. In fact it is an intellectual defect in Mephistopheles, that his having such an eye for evil and his taking such an interest in it prevent his allowing any thing for good in his calculations. To Mephistopheles the world seems going to perdition as fast as it can; while, in the same universal confusion, beings like the archangels recognise the good struggling with the evil.

Respecting the part Mephistopheles performs in the drama we have already said something. Going about the world, linked to Faust, is

to him only a racy way of acting the devil. Having as his companion a man so flighty in his notions would increase the flavour of whatever he engaged in. All through he is laughing in his sleeve at Faust, and deriving a keen enjoyment from his transcendental style of thinking. Faust's noble qualities are all Greek and Gaelic to his cold and devilish nature. He has a contempt for all strong feeling, all sentiment, all evangelism. He enjoys the Miltonic vastly. Thus in the Prologue in Heaven he quizzes the archangels upon the grandiloquence of their song. Not that he does not understand that sort of thing intellectually, but that it is not in his nature to sympathise with any thing like sentiment. Hence, when he assumes the sentimental himself and mimicks any lofty strain, although he does it full justice in as far as giving the whole intellectual extent of meaning is concerned, yet he always does so in words so inappropriate emotionally that the effect is a parody. He must have found amusement enough in Faust's company to have reconciled him in some measure to losing him finally. But to go on. Mephistopheles acts the devil all through. In the first place he acts the devil to Faust himself, for he is continually taking his own way and starting difficulties whenever Faust proposes any thing. Then again in his conduct towards the other principal personages of the drama it is the same. In the murder of poor Margaret, her mother, her child, and her brother, we have as fiendish an act as devil could be supposed capable of perpetrating. And lastly, in the mere filling up and side play it is the same. He is constantly doing unnecessary mischief. If he enters Auerbach's wine-cellar and introduces himself to the four drinking companions, it is to set the poor brutes fighting and make them cut off each other's noses. If he spends a few minutes in talk with Martha, it is to make the silly old woman expose her foibles. The second part of Faust is devilry all through, a tissue of bewilderingments and devilries. And while doing all this Mephistopheles is still the same cold, self-possessed, sarcastic being. If he exhibit any emotion at all, it is a kind of devilish anger. Perhaps,

too, once or twice we recognise something like terror or flurry. But on the whole he is a spirit bereft of feeling. What could indicate the heart of a devil so unequivocally as his words to Faust in the harrowing prison-scene?

“Komm, komm, ich lasse dich mit ihr im stich.”

And now for a word or two describing Milton's Satan and Goëthe's Mephistopheles by each other. Satan is a colossal figure; Mephistopheles an elaborated portrait. Satan is an archangel scheming his future existence; Mephistopheles is the modern spirit of evil. Mephistopheles has a distinctly marked physiognomy; Satan has not. Satan has a sympathetic knowledge of good; Mephistopheles knows good only as a phenomenon. Much of what Satan says might be spoken by Raphael; a devilish spirit runs through all that Mephistopheles says. Satan's bad actions are preceded by noble reasonings; Mephistopheles does not reason. Satan's bad actions are followed by compunctious visitings; Mephistopheles never repents. Satan is often “inly racked;” Mephistopheles can feel nothing more noble than disappointment. Satan conducts an enterprise; Mephistopheles enjoys an occupation. Satan has strength of purpose; Mephistopheles is volatile. Satan feels anxiety; Mephistopheles lets things happen. Satan's greatness lies in vastness of his motives; Mephistopheles's in his intimate acquaintance with every thing. Satan has a few sublime conceptions; Mephistopheles has accumulated a mass of observations. Satan declaims; Mephistopheles puts in remarks. Satan is conversant with the moral aspects of things and uses adjectives; Mephistopheles has a preference for nouns, and, if he uses an adjective at all, it is only to convey a signification which he *knows* to exist. Satan may end in being a devil; Mephistopheles is a devil irrevocably.

Milton's Satan and Goëthe's Mephistopheles are literary performances; and for that matter neither Milton nor Goëthe need have believed in a devil at all. Luther's devil, on the other hand, was a being recognised by him as actually existing; as existing, we might say, with a ven-

geance. The strong conviction Luther had on this point is a phenomenon in his character. The narrative of his life abounds in anecdotes, shewing that the Devil with him was no chimaera, no mere orthodoxy, no fiction. In every page of his writings we have the word *Teufel*, *Teufel*, repeated again and again; occasionally there occurs an express dissertation upon the nature and function of the Evil Spirit; and one of the longest chapters in his *Table Talk* is that entitled "The Devil and his Works," indicating that his conversation with his friends often turned on the subject of Satanic agency. *Teufel* was actually the strongest signification he had; and whenever he was excited to his highest emotional pitch, it came in to assist his utterance at its climax, and give him a correspondingly powerful expression. "This thing I will do," it was common for him to say, "in spite of all who may oppose me; be it duke, emperor, priest, hishop, cardinal, pope, or Devil." Man's heart, he says, is a "stock, stein, eisen, Teufel hart Herz." And it was not a mere vague conception he had of this being, such as theology might oblige. On the contrary, he had observed him as a man would his personal enemy; and in so doing had formed a great many conclusions respecting his powers and his character. In general, Luther's devil may be defined as a personification in the spirit of Scripture of the resisting medium Luther had to toil his way through — spiritual fears, passionate uprisings, fainting resolutions within himself; error, weakness, envy in those around him; and without, a whole world howling for his destruction. It is in effect as if Luther had said, "Scripture reveals to me the existence of a great accursed being, whose function it is to produce evil. It is for me to ascertain the character of this being whom I, of all men, have to deal with. And how am I to do so except by observing him working? God knows I have not far to go in search of his manifestations." And thus Luther went on filling up the Scriptural proposition with his daily experience. He was constantly gaining a clearer conception of his great personal antagonist, constantly stumbling upon some more concealed trait in the Spirit's character. The being

himself was invisible; but he was walking in the midst of his manifestations. It was as if there were some Being whom we could not see, nor directly in the ordinary way have any intercourse with; but who every morning, before it was light, came and left at our door some exquisite specimen of his workmanship; it would of course be difficult under such disadvantages to become acquainted with the character of our invisible correspondent and morning-visitant, still we could arrive at a few conclusions respecting him, and the more of his workmanship we saw, the more insight we would come to have. Or again, in striving to realise to himself the Scriptural proposition about the Devil, Luther, to speak in the language of the Positive Philosophy, was just striving to ascertain the laws according to which evil happens; only the Positive Philosophy would lay a veto on any such speculation, and pronounce it fundamentally vicious in this respect, that there are not two courses of events separable from each other in history, the one good and the other evil, but that evil comes of good and good of evil, so that if we are to have a science of history at all, the least we can have is a science of the laws according to which, not evil follows evil, but events follow each other. But History to Luther was not a physical course of events. It was God acting, and the Devil opposing.

In so far Luther did not differ from his age. Belief in Satanic agency was universal at that period. We have no idea now how powerful this belief was. We realise something of the truth when we read the depositions in an old book of trials for witchcraft. But it is sufficient to glance over any writings of the period to see what a real meaning was then attached to the words "Hell" and "Devil." The spirit of these words has become obsolete, chased away by the spirit of exposition. That was what Auguste Comte calls the Theological Period, when all the phenomena of mind and matter were referred to the agency of spirits. The going out of the belief in Satanic agency (for even those who retain it in profession allow it no force in practice), Comte would attribute to the progress of the spirit of that philo-

sophy of which he is the apostle. We do not think, however, that the mere progress of the scientific spirit, that is, the mere disposition of men to pursue one mode of thinking with respect to all classes of phenomena, could have been sufficient of itself to work such an alteration on the general mind. We are fond of accounting for it, in part at least, by the going out, in the progress of civilisation, of those sensations which seem naturally fitted to nourish the belief in supernatural beings. The tendency of civilisation has been to diminish our opportunities of feeling terror, of feeling strongly at all. The horrific plays a much less important part in human experience than it once did. To mention but a single instance, we are exempted now, by mechanical contrivances for locomotion, &c., from the necessity of being much in darkness or wild physical solitude. This is especially the case with those who dwell in cities, and therefore exert an intellectual influence. The moaning of the wind at night in winter is about their highest experience of the kind; and is it not a corroboration of the view we are taking, that the belief in the supernatural is always strongest at the moment of this experience? Positions our ancestors were in every day, are strange to us. We have not now to travel through forests at the dead of night, nor to pass a lonely spot on a moor where a murderer's body is swinging from a gibbet. Tam o' Shanter, even before he came to Allowa' Kirk, saw more than many of us do in a lifetime.

"By this time he was cross the ford
Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor'd,
And past the birks and muckle stane
Whare drunken Charlie brak's neck bane,
And through the whins and by the cairn
Whare hunters fand the murder'd bairn,
And near the thorn aboon the well,
Whare Muigo's mither hang'd hersel."

This effect of civilisation in reducing all our sensations to those of comfort, we conceive to be really an alarming circumstance, in the point of view under consideration. It is necessary for the sake of emotion to resist the universal application of the Positive Philosophy, even if we adopt and adore it as an instrument of explanation. The Positive Philosophy commands us to forbear all specula-

tion into the inexplicable. For the sake of emotion this order must be disregarded. Speculation into the essence of things is the invariable accompaniment of strong feeling; and the moral nature of man would starve upon such chopped straw as the mere intellectual relations of similitude and succession. Nor does it meet the demands of emotional culture to say that the Positive Philosophy would be always so far in arrears of the known phenomena, and that here would be mystery enough. No! the Positive Philosophy would require to strike a chasm in itself, under the title of the Liberty of Hypothesis. We do not mean the liberty of hypothesis merely as a means of anticipating theory, but for emotional purposes. It is in this light that we would welcome Animal Magnetism, or any thing else whatever that would but knock a hole through the paper wall that encloses our mode of being, snub the self-conceit of our senses, and give us other and more difficult phenomena to explain.

But though Luther and his age were not at variance in the belief in Satanic agency, Luther, of course, did this as he did every thing else, gigantically. The Devil, as Luther conceived him, was not the Satan of Milton; although had Luther set himself to realise the Miltonic narrative, his conception might not have been dissimilar. But it was as the enemy of mankind, working in human affairs, that Luther conceived the devil. We should expect his conception therefore to tally with Goëthe's in some respects, but only as a conception of Luther's would tally with one of Goëthe's. Luther's conception was far truer to the grand Scriptural definition than either Milton's or Goëthe's. Mephistopheles being a character in a drama, and apparently fully occupied in his capacity as such, we cannot bring ourselves to recognise in him that virtually omnipotent being to whom all evil is owing, who is leavening the human mind every where, as if the atmosphere round the globe were impregnated with the venom of his spirit. In the case of Milton's Satan we have no such difficulty, because in his case a whole planet is the stake, and there are only two individuals on it. But Luther's conception met the whole

exigency of Scripture. His conception was distinctly that of a being to whose operation all the evil of all times and all places is owing, of a veritable *πνευμα* diffused through the earth's atmosphere. Hence his mind had to take up with the notion of a multiplicity of devils; for he could only conceive the Arch-spirit acting corporeally through imps or emanations. Goëthe's Mephistopheles might pass for one of these.

It would be possible farther to illustrate Luther's conception of the Evil Principle by presenting a great many of his specific sayings respecting him. It would be found from these that his conception was that of a being to whom evil of all kinds was dear. The Devil with him was a meteorological agent. Devils, he said, are in woods, and waters, and dark pooly places, ready to hurt passers-by; there are devils also in the thick black clouds, who cause hail and thunders, and lightnings, and poison the air, and the fields and the pastures. When such things happen, philosophers say they are natural, and ascribe them to the planets, and I know not what all. The Devil he believed also to be the patron of witchcraft. The Devil, he said, had the power of deceiving the senses, so that one would swear he heard or saw something, while really the whole was an illusion. The Devil also was at the bottom of dreaming and somnambulism. He was likewise the author of diseases. "I hold," said Luther, "that the Devil sendeth all heavy diseases and sicknesses upon people." Diseases are as it were the Devil striking people; only in striking he must use some natural instrument, as a murderer uses a sword. When our sins get the upper hand, and all is going wrong, then the Devil must be God's hangman, to clear away obstructions and to blast the earth with famines and pestilences. Whatsoever procures death, that is the Devil's trade. All sadness and melancholy come of the Devil. So does insanity. But the Devil has no farther power over the soul of a maniac. The Devil works in the affairs of nations. He looks always upward, taking an interest in what is high and pompous; he does not look downward, taking little interest in what is insignificant

and lowly. He likes to work on the great scale; to establish an influence, as it were, over the central minds which manage affairs. The Devil is also a spiritual tempter. He is the opponent of the Divine grace in the hearts of individuals. This was the aspect of the doctrine of Satanic agency which would be most used in preaching; and accordingly Luther's propositions on the point are very specific. He had, as it were, ascertained the laws of Satanic operation upon the human spirit. The Devil, he said, knows Scripture well, and uses it in argument. He shoots fearful thoughts, which are his fiery darts, into the hearts of the godly. The Devil is acquainted even with those mysterious enjoyments, those spiritual excitements, which the Christian would suppose a being like him must be ignorant of. What gross inexperienced fellows, he says, are these Papist commentators! They are for interpreting Paul's "thorn in the flesh" to be merely fleshly lust; because they know no other kind of tribulation than that. But though the Devil has great power over the human mind, he is limited in some respects. He has no means, for instance, of knowing the thoughts of the faithful until they give them utterance. Again, if the Devil be once foiled in argument, he cannot tempt that soul again on the same tack. The Papacy being with Luther the grand existing form of evil, he of course recognised the Devil in it. If the Papacy were once overthrown, Satan would lose his stronghold. Never on earth again would he be able to pile up such another edifice. No wonder, then, that at that moment all the energies of the enraged and despairing Spirit were employed to prop up the reeling and tottering fabric. Necessarily, therefore, Luther and Satan were personal antagonists. Satan saw that the grand struggle was with Luther. If he could but crush him by physical violence, or make him forget God, then the world would be his own again. So often did he wrestle with Luther's spirit; often in nightly heart-agonies did he try to shake his faith in Christ. But he was never victorious. "All the Duke Georges in the universe," said Luther, "are not equal to a single devil; and

I do not fear the Devil." "I would wish," he said, "to die rather by the Devil's hands than by the hands of Pope or Emperor; for then I should die at all events by the hands of a great and mighty prince of the world; but if I die through him, he shall eat such a bit of me as will be his suffocation; he shall spew me out again; and at the last day, I, in requital, shall devour him." When all other means were unavailing, Luther found that the Devil could not stand humour. In his hours of spiritual agony, he tells us, when the Devil was heaping up his sins before him, so as to make him doubt if he should be saved, and when he could not drive him away by uttering sentences of Holy

Writ, or by prayer, he used to address him thus: "Devil, if, as you say, Christ's blood, which was shed for my sins, be not sufficient to ensure my salvation, can't you pray for me yourself, Devil?" At this, the Devil invariably fled, "quia est superbus spiritus et non potest ferre contemptum sui."

What with Luther was wrestling with the Devil, we at this day would call low spirits. Life must be a much more insipid thing now than it was then. O what a soul that man must have had, under what a weight of feeling, that would have crushed a million of us, he must have trod the earth!

THE LUCK OF BARRY LYNDON ;

A ROMANCE OF THE LAST CENTURY.

BY FITZ-BOODLE.

PART II.

CHAPTER III.—CONCLUSION.

IF the world were not composed of a race of ungrateful scoundrels, who share your prosperity while it lasts, and, even when gorged with your venison and burgundy, abuse the generous giver of the feast, I am sure I merit a good name and a high reputation in Ireland, at least, where my generosity was unbounded, and the splendour of my mansion and entertainments unequalled by any other nobleman of my time. As long as my magnificence lasted, all the country was free to partake of it; I had hunters sufficient in my stables to mount a regiment of dragoons, and butts of wine in my cellar which would have made whole counties drunk for years. Castle Lyndon became the head-quarters of scores of needy gentlemen, and I never rode a-hunting but I had a dozen young fellows of the best blood of the country riding as my squires and gentlemen of the horse. My son, little Castle Lyndon, was a prince; his breeding and manners, even at his early age, shewed him to be worthy of the two

noble families from whom he was descended, and I don't know what high hopes I had for the boy, and indulged in a thousand fond anticipations as to his future success and figure in the world. But stern Fate had determined that I should leave none of my race behind me, and ordained that I should finish my career, as I see it closing now—poor, lonely, and childless. I may have had my faults, but no man shall dare to say of me that I was not a good and tender father. I loved that boy passionately, perhaps with a blind partiality; I denied him nothing. Gladly, gladly, I swear, would I have died that his premature doom might have been averted. I think there is not a day since I lost him but his bright face and beautiful smiles do not look down on me out of heaven where he is, and that my heart does not yearn towards him. That sweet child was taken from me at the age of nine years, when he was full of beauty and promise; and so powerful is the hold his memory has of me

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Masson, David
The three devils

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